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Africa, A Poem.

SECOND EDITION.

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5.17.19.
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AFRICA.

IN the sublimity of Nature's silence,
Profound, thou sitt'st a queen among the nations ;
And mark'st, with regal pride, thy wide domain.
Thy trackless deserts, unexplored by man,
Spread 'neath the smile of heaven's meridian sun,
Shining in vain upon their barrenness :
While sister realms, rejoicing in his beams,
His kindly influence own, and grateful bloom,
Adorned with richest fruits, and fairest flowers.
Thy mountains dark, magnificently rude,
Sky-bearing Atlas owning as their peer,
Lift their proud heads to heav'n. Thy golden mines
Yield their bright treasures to thy diadem.
Within thy spreading borders, generous Nile,
King of thy rivers, with a monarch's pride,
Majestic rolls his deep and mighty waters,
Bearing fertility through all his range.
Here Niger winds his silent, secret way,
Where human step has never trod, sublime
In the dark myst'ry of his untrack'd course.
Populous and powerful kingdoms rise to adorn

Thy far-extending sceptre.—With fix'd gaze
Departed ages, in their mighty march,
Have mark'd thy greatness. On thy land arose,
Cloudless and beautiful, the glorious smile
Of star-crown'd Science, empress of the mind ;
Beyond Tradition's power to tell the day
When her bright eye first beam'd upon thy sight.
When Time was young, divine Philosophy,
Casting abroad through Nature's boundless realms
Her piercing glance, pursued her lofty march
Of moral grandeur, visited thy shores,
And there, content, made her illustrious home.
The list'ning world has heard of Egypt's fame :
The arts of life flourished unrivall'd here,
Ere polished Greece was known, or the fair name
Of classic Italy, had pleased the ear.
She still survives :—Egypt, whose mighty works,
Proud in unmov'd, unbending loftiness,
Mock the rude power of Time, and smile at ocean's roar.
Rising in beauty, see the far-famed Thebes,
Queen of thy cities, with her hundred gates :—
Thebes, the proud theme of poesy ; the boast,
Of those who love to mark the historic page
With glorious names, whose deathless fame shall live,
Till years shall cease to move their wonted rounds.
Memphis, renown'd of old, survives in story.
Where Pharos' lofty tower, of spotless marble,
Rises in silent majesty, the wonder
Of passing ages, and a gazing world,
See Alexandria, rich in classic lore,

Once the fam'd seat of splendid royalty,
Magnificent in ruin, meets the eye
That loves to view the distant step of years,
Gone by forever, mingling silently
With that eventful day when Time was born.
What monuments of ancient glory mark
That site where, erst, imperial Dido rear'd
The lofty walls and towers of royal Carthage !
Rival of splendid Rome, and mistress of the wave.
Here Juno's beauteous fane the princess rais'd,
Magnificent, and brought to grace its state,
Gifts worthy of a queen : and here, reflecting
The glorious splendors of the mid-day sun,
Apollo's golden temple charm'd the eye.
The living monuments of human skill
Have long survived their builders. With a voice
Mighty in silence, they proclaim the frailty
Of *hands*, that wrought for latest time ;—the power,
Which death can ne'er destroy, of *minds*, that plann'd
Deeds so stupendous :—minds, the wondrous work
Of that great Architect, whose powerful word
Call'd the fair fabric of the universe
From night and chaos ;—whose almighty hand
On gloomy *nothing* hung the pond'rous earth ;—
Who spread with matchless skill the starry heavens,
And gave the sun his light :—whose inspiration
Bestows on man the wisdom and the power,
Which make his works immortal.
Land of the Palm ! the passing flood of time,
The rush of years unnumber'd, has not swept

Thy glory from the earth. Flourishing cities,
And royal palaces, and splendid fanes,
Proclaim thee empress still.—Commercial Cairo
Sends her white sails over the mountain wave ;
Her num'rous spires in silent grandeur rise ;
Her lofty ramparts give the wond'ring eye
A scene magnificent and beautiful,
Which holds in worldless joy, the stranger's gaze.
And see, invincible in Nature's strength,
Where rock-built Constantina now succeeds
To famous Cirta, once Numidia's bulwark.
Thy beauteous valley, Fez, in olden time
Fair Science' favour'd home, presents a view
Luxuriant and lovely.—Dark Algiers,
Like a proud princess, from her hilly throne,
Looks out in glory on the stormy sea,
The admiration of the mariner.
Thy kingdoms, Nubia, Bornou, Cashna, spread,
Powerful and wide, where the advent'rous step
Of foreign man has seldom dar'd to explore.—
Empress of ancient time ! with pensive sigh
Thou gazest on the ruins of the *past*,
In desolation grand ! With regal joy
Thou mark'st the glories of thy later day ;
And still thy proud eye smiles upon thy realms,
For still thou art a queen.—What dismal sound
Bursts fearfully on the astonish'd ear,
Chilling the heart with nameless dread—hist ! hist !
The wailings of deep-felt woe, as if the sword
Of desolation, with reckless force, had sever'd

The tenderest ties that bind man to his kind ;
Leaving the heart in untold agony,
Bleeding at every pore, with wounds so deep,
That human accents cannot speak their pain,
And earth can yield no balm to sooth their anguish.

—Again !—what mean these shouts of misery ?
It is the voice of lamentation deep !

Ah ! why does she who lately stood a queen,
Now, clothed in sackcloth, spurn the hand of pity,
Refusing to be comforted ?—She weeps
Her captive sons, rent from her bleeding bosom,
And leaving there a grief “ *that will not heal.* ”

A demon hand tears from the mother’s arms
The smiling babe, and gives the years of manhood
To toil, and bitterest woe.—How many hearts,
Rich in the charities of Nature, bleed
Over the miseries of kindred hearts,
Exil’d from home and country !—**SLAVERY !**

This is *thy* work ! !—

Shame ! shame ! the son of heaven, the lord of earth,
Noble, erect, born in the image of God,
Rears his bold front, and *buys*, and *sells*—his *brother* !
Traffics in human flesh !—Oh ! hide thy face,
Proud man !—let darkness cover thee forever ;
Lest the bright sun should blush to see thy deeds.

The fell Sinoom,

On whose dark wing Death rides in dreadful triumph,
Is gentle as the breath of early morn,
Is soft as spring’s first zephyrs, when compar’d
With thy foul atmosphere, Oppression, fraught

With direst woe to every living thing
That comes within its blasting influence.

Thy sandy wilds, Zahara,
Bloom with the charms of Eden, to the land,
Accurs'd, where Slav'ry wields his iron sceptre.
The basilisk, that lures with deadly charm
His unresisting victim, is kind and harmless.—
Lybia ! the dreadful natives of thy deserts
Are gentle and tame--the monsters of thy rivers,
Noxious no more, are beautiful, and mild ;--
The treacherous crocodile is fair as day--
Serpents, and horrible things, of deadliest name,
Are *lovely*, to the fiend in human form,
Who enslaves his fellow !—'tis a monstrous sight !
In deep abhorrence nature stands aghast !
And all that's noble in man, cries out in shame
At the foul deed !

Can beings,
Who dwell beneath the fostering smile of heaven,
And gaze upon creation's loveliness,
Commit such acts abhorrent ?—Regal power
Has given its royal sanction to deeds at which
Angels might weep !—Aye ! boasted human law
Has wink'd at crime !—The mighty and the mean,
Have join'd in a vile trade, on whose black works
The stars of heaven might be ashamed to shine !

But there is yet on earth,—
Even on this globe where man degrades his name,
One bless'd asylum from the tyrant's power ;

One dear retreat, where the oppress'd is FREE.
Land of the happy ! there the race of man,
Link'd in one holy tie of brotherhood,
Worship one common Father ; and the path
Of human pilgrimage cheer with the flowers ;—
The beauteous flowers of mutual love and kindness.—
Land of the *free*—the happy !—in thy bosom
The slave will find a refuge.—Weary, sick,
At scenes of human woe, and human crime,
Fair western world—asylum for the wretched—
My travelled spirit seeks thy peaceful realm,
Where Oppression's arm must wither ; and the fiend
Would never dare to utter his demon voice,
Even in a whisper.—Sad and weary heart !
Turn thee, with pensive joy, to seek thy home.

Is it a dream !

A wild and dreadful vision of the night,
When deep sleep falls on man ! or do I see,
In waking horror, a monstrous form, so frightful,
That human language finds no softer name
To express its hideous deformity,
Than **SLAVERY**--darest sound !—Is it a dream ?
Or do I hear a voice of dreadful import,
The wild and mingling groans of writhing millions,
Calling for vengeance on my guilty land !

Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes
A fount of tears!—Columbia! in *thy* bosom
Can slavery dwell?—Then is thy fame a lie!
Oppression lifts his hideous, gorgon head,
Beneath the eye of *Freedom*! !—Oh my country!

This deep anathema--this direst evil,
 "Like a foul blot on thy dishonour'd brow,"
 Mars all thy beauty ; and thy far-fam'd glory
 Is but a gilded toy, for fools to play with !
 For in the mock'ry of thy boasted freedom,
 Thou smil'st, with deadly joy, on human woe !
 Thy soil is nourish'd with tears and blood !—Columbia !
 O let the deepest blush of honest shame
 Crimson thy cheek ! for vile Oppression walks
 Within thy borders !—rears his brazen front
 'Neath thy unchiding eye !—Oh tell it not
 In Gath, lest those who worship idol gods
 Laugh thee to scorn, and cry, in mad derision,
 Behold what *Christians* do !*

Will the spirit

Of free-born man yield to the galling chain,
 Which binds his flesh ? Can toil, and stripes, and death,
 Subdue the soul ?—Oppression's ruthless hand
 May sever the *limbs* :—the immortal *mind is free*.
 Let tyrants tremble on their tott'ring thrones !
 Let the proud man who dares to call his brother,
 Form'd by the same Hand that gave him life,
 By the vile name of **SLAVE**, start with dismay,
 Like him of old, Belshazzar, when, (all else
 Invisible, wrapt in the dreadful veil
 Of mystery,) a *hand*, the monarch saw,

* It ought to be remembered, with deep self-abasement, that the slave trade has found the mass of its abettors among nations nominally Christian. According to the most judicious calculations, Africa has been drained annually of 150,000 of its inhabitants; and—shameful acknowledgment ! the great receptacles of this unhappy race have been the West Indies, and the United States. A million and a half are supposed to exist in our own free country. *Mem. of Rev. S. J. Mills*, pp. 121, 122.

(Belonging not to earth,) writing his doom,
 In worlds *felt*, though they could not be decipher'd.
 There is a spirit in man, that will not bend
 To the tyrant's frown !—Mark yon portentous cloud,
 Rising from ocean's bosom.—See ! it spreads,
 More dense and dreadful.—Is it the distant noise
 Of mutt'ring thunder—('tis a strange, wild sound !)
 That breaks so fearfully upon the sense ?
 As the mad mingling of many voices
 It steals on the affrighted ear of night ;
 And all again is calm and still as death !

* * * * *

The storm has burst !—Ah ! that tremendous crash
 Shook the strong hold of giant Tyranny ;
 And rent the prison walls of captive thousands.
 —Rejoice, Humanity ! the slave is free !*
 In the proud liberty which *Nature* gave
 He stands, a *man*, and lo ! his cruel tyrant
 Quakes, like a coward, 'neath his blazing eye.

 Ah ! still the sound is heard,
 Of lamentation deep, of anguish wild,
 Within thy borders, boasted land of Freedom !
 Columbia ! thou the poet's glorious theme ;
 The patriot's pride ; whose mild and equal laws
 The high-soul'd statesman charm ; and cheer the heart
 Of blest Philanthropy.—Among thy mountains,
 The battlements of nature, Liberty,

* The Revolution in St. Domingo, to use the language of an able writer, "threw upon the world two organized and independent states of Negroes, a sight never before witnessed, and that too by an awful eruption in the centre of that part of the world which is most deeply laden with sins against Afriea."

Weary of courts, with a proud smile has plac'd
Her eagle-home :—and yet—Oh shame ! shame ! shame !
The wailings of the *Slave* are heard within thee !
—But hark ! a voice sweet as the songs of heaven,
Pours on the ear delightful melody,
Charming the soul to peace.—It is the voice
Of holy Charity, breathing in sounds
Blissful and pure, *Let the oppress'd go free !*
Millions of hearts, touch'd by the love of heaven,
With lofty joy respond the harmonious strains,
Let the oppress'd go FREE !—Thou great Deliverer !
Who cam'st from glory to redeem the slave ;—
To preach a full salvation to the *lost*,
And joy to mourners—'twas the pure religion
Taught by thy voice divine, inspir'd the strain.—
It was the spirit of thy Gospel, breath'd
That holy, happy song, omnipotent
In melody, and melting cruel hearts
To tenderest deeds of love.—Fair Pity weeps
Tears of delight.—My raptur'd spirit ! hail,
With joy unspeakable, and full of glory,
A blissful hour, a bright and cloudless morn,
Rising in beauty on the land I love !
For see ! the hydra-monster, **SLAVERY**,
Flies from that land, in dire dismay, to hide
His horrid visage in eternal night.
Fair dreams of hope, visions of future time,
All beautiful and glorious, rise before me.—
Children of Afrie ! poor afflicted ones !
The day will come, when all your wrongs shall cease.

The day will come, when Slav'ry's iron rod
 No more shall wound.—Ye shall return in peace
 To your own land—Your natal shores shall echo
 With shouts of praise—The songs of captives ransom'd
 From th' power of the enemy, shall sound
 Through all your reahns, and fill the world with joy.
 In glad expectance of that blissful day,
 Already see, with looks of soul-felt peace,
 A little band, the happy pioneers
 Of exile hearts restor'd, and ransom'd millions,
 Led by a noble spirit of that race*
 Which long has writh'd beneath Oppression's power,
 Towards ocean turn their animated steps,
 To seek their fathers' land :—their fathers, torn
 With ruthless hand from the delights of home,
 The sympathies of kindred and affection,
 And all those tender, powerful, nameless, ties,
 Which bind the heart to the land that gave it being.
 With smiles of hope they trust the friendly wave ;
 And soon the winds of heaven shall waft them home.
 We gaze a kind farewell, with tears of love.

* Paul Cuffee was a distinguished ornament of the African race ; and though educated in all the obscurity and penury of the great body of men of colour, rose to affluence, respectability, and distinction, by the energy of a mind that was equal to the noblest enterprise, and the benevolence of a heart singularly devoted to doing good. Long will the sympathies of Paul be remembered in behalf of degenerate Africa. No cause lay nearer his heart than the intellectual, civil, and moral elevation of that injured people. To advance this cause he undertook, at his own expense, and in his own vessel, an expedition to the British settlement at Sierra Leone. He went to England for the purpose of suggesting his views to the managers of the African Institution, and after his return made a second voyage to Sierra Leone, carrying with him about forty persons of his own colour, with the view of commencing a settlement on the soil of his fore-fathers, having expended in the enterprise nearly \$4000 from his own private resources. *Mem. of Rev. S. J. Mills.*

It will be recollected that the expedition of Paul was made previous to the formation of the American Colonization Society. The writer hopes that its introduction as a subsequent event will be pardoned as an *acknowledged* anachronism.

—But who is this meets our returning view ?
 His heaven-ward eye is bright with holy hope,
 And Charity's celestial smile :—and see !
 Another—and another, animate
 With pure benevolence, and Christian zeal ;
 Fill'd with that love whose generous sympathies
 Regard all nations, and embrace a world,
 Pursue their pathless way through storm and darkness,
 To the land whose wrongs have fill'd their waking thoughts,
 And grieved with dreams of woe their nightly rest.
 Their prayer is heard ! they reach that injur'd land :—
 They meet her noble sons.* Her lofty chiefs
 Extend the generous hand, kind nature's token,
 And greet the strangers with a smile of peace.
 And now, beneath the canopy of heaven,
 Within the luxuriant shade of orange groves,
 They meet in friendly council with the men
 From a clime beyond the ocean ; and discourse,
 With mutual confidence, for Afric's good,
 Seeking her peace.—And see that aged man,
 Over whose venerable head have fallen
 The snows of many a winter, feebly turns
 His tott'ring steps, and asks, in accents mild,
 Of those who on a pilgrimage of kindness
 Cross'd the tempestuous wave, the word of God,†

* I am struck with wonder at the appearance of the native Africans. The sickly and depressed countenance of a Philadelphia coloured man is not to be seen amongst them. A noble aspect, a dignified mien—a frank and open countenance,—the entire demeanor of the wild man!—Sir, it is worth a voyage to Africa to see the Kroomen.—Extract from a private letter of the late Rev. Samuel Bacon, Agent of the American Government for persons liberated from slave ships on the coast of Africa.

† One man, whose hair and beard were white with age, said he wished to hear more about God's Book before he died. *Mem. of Rev. S. J. Mills.*

'That he may hear, and live. And there is one,
A youth of princely blood, and lofty port.*
He feels the desolation of his land,
And inourns her griefs.—His dark and pensive eye
Is fixed upon the strangers ; and with hope,
Shaded by fear, he marks the cloudless day
When foreign foot-steps press'd his native shore.

* * * * *

The noiseless wing of Time,
Unwearied in his mighty energies,
Sublime, yet viewless, silent, yet unceasing,
Has number'd years.—Death has pursued his march
Through earth, and many a mighty one has fallen
Beneath his stroke resistless.—Deeds of fame
Have been achiev'd.—The mad and busy world
Repeats its giddy rounds, and laughs, and dies !
Yet, land belov'd ! thy cause is not forgot.
O there are hearts, even in this heartless world,
Cherish for thee one bright and precious hope :
Thy glad deliv'rance from the barb'rous hand
Of human bondage, and thy blest release
From that more cruel yoke which binds the soul.
The lofty powers of *mind* are engaged for thee.
Manly and noble spirits are at work
In thy dear cause, for thy eternal peace.
For thee Affection breathes her gentle sigh ;

* Kong Couber walked along the shore with us, and giving us his hand, said, "God bless you, and give you a good voyage to your country." While we gave sail he sat down under an orange tree, apparently pensive and melancholy. This prince is conscious of the depressed condition of his people, and the barbarous state of his country. He sighs for their improvement. *Mem. of Rev. S. J. Mills.*

For woman's heart, in its deep, pure tenderness,
 Remembers Africa.—How many prayers
 Aseend for thy salvation, in the name
 Of that high Priest, who bears upon his heart
 'The oppress'd and sorrowful!—and—dearer title!
 In the name of that *good Shepherd*, who hath said,
And other sheep I have, not of this fold;
Them also I must bring; and they shall hear
My voice, and there shall be one fold, one Shepherd.

Who are these,

With holy, happy smile, and solemn step,
 Entering the consecrated house of prayer,
 As if they lov'd to tread its sacred aisles?

* * * * *

Delightful scene!

I view it still.* Divine Philanthropy
 Smil'd on the glorious work.—The church of God
 Bless'd the propitious hour.—A multitude
 Stood in the stillness of entranced hope,
 And breathless expectation.—Witnesses
 Invisible were there!—Myriads of spirits,
 Redeem'd from earth, hover'd around the place
 With joy that swells to sweeter, loftier strains,
 The songs of heaven, when one repenting sinner
 Turns to his God, and meets forgiving love.
 The shining hosts above—the orders bright
 Of angels, *natives* of th' ethereal plains,
 Bend from their seats of bliss, and for a moment

* This little poem was suggested by the recollection of the recent services in Park Street meeting house, Boston, for the purpose of organizing an African church, consisting of persons about to embark for the Colony at Liberia.

Forget their golden harps, their hymns of joy.—
Silence sublime !

The prayer of faith ascends
For the little exile band, naming themselves
By Israel's name,—subscribing with their hands
To Israel's God.—Then bursts the rapt'rous strain
Of glory and of praise, from countless myriads !
As on the birth-day of a new creation
The morning stars again together sing ;
And all the sons of God shout with new joy
The holy melody of that blest anthem,
Which gladden'd mortal ear when Judea's shepherds
Watch'd midst the starry night.—*Glory to God—
On earth peace—and good will to offending man.*
The deed of that blest hour is register'd
In the archives of Eternity !—what tongue
Shall dare predict the effect unspeakable,
Forming a link in that mysterious chain
Connecting *Time* and *Heaven* !—The grand result
Belongs, *Eternity*, to thee !—The power
Of Seraphs cannot grasp it !—Finite minds,
Howe'er in knowledge elevate, in thought
Profound, are impotent to reach the deep,—
The mighty secret !—But the glorious future ;—
The long, the interminable day of heaven,
When Suns are dark, and Time shall be no more,
Will prove the amazing influence of that hour,—
That little hour ! upon the happiness
Of multitudes born for immortal life.
'Tis done !—Upon the dark and troubled deep,

A little ark, guarded by Him who holds
Within their appointed bounds the mighty waves,
Bears to the bosom of their native land
'The infant church.—Afric ! thy exile sons
Come home to thee with joy, bringing the Word,
—The precious word of life, to cheer thy shores
With tidings of Salvation.—Thou ! whose voice,
Omnipotent in its almighty love,
Speaks to the raging storm, and all is calm !
In safety lead this little ransom'd band
Through the wilderness of waters, as of old
Thy people thou didst lead, through pathless wilds,
To th' Land of Promise.—Let thy matchless power
Guide and protect them—thy parental love
Bless them, and give them peace.—

Bright ey'd Hope,
To thy fair shores, Liberia, wings her flight,
Companion'd by her elder sister, Faith,
And heaven-descended Charity.—They hail
The destin'd home of ocean's pilgrims.—Here
Nature assumes her loveliest smiles, to greet
The oppress'd set free.—My ardent spirit seeks,
Swifter than winds and waves, the blooming realm,
And waits to hail the exile band restor'd
To their fathers' birth place.—See ! the sails are furl'd.
They come !—they raise upon the sea-beat shore
Their song of praise to Him who held the waters
In his almighty hand, who bade the tempest
Be still, and all was peace.
Within this beauteous land has the sweet voice

Of praise to the true God gladden'd the ear
Of listening nature ere this happy hour?—
—Hark!—even now I heard celestial strains
Mingle unutterably with the songs
Of those who love, though they have never seen,
Their ascended Lord.—And see! what forms of light,
Hov'ring around this little band, appear
Like visitants from heaven.—These are the spirits,
Made perfect, of men who died for love of thee,
Poor Africa!—and now their ransom'd souls,
Redeem'd from death, joy in the rising light
Of a blest day, whose glorious dawn they hail'd
On that dear land in which their faithful hearts
Repose in hope, resting in Him who died
That man might live,—in Him who is alive
Forevermore.

What visions rise
Before the eye of Faith!—my spirit, burst
Thy earthly tenement, and look abroad,
With raptured inspiration, on the land,
For which, with love that *waters cannot quench*,
The self-devoted MILLS resigned his breath,
And made his grave in ocean.—On the land
Where BACON, pure and ardent being! sleeps,
In Him, the Resurrection and the life.
See! this devoted band from distant shores,
More firmly plant in their own fathers' land
The glorious standard of the *Prince of peace*,
Rais'd by their elder brothers in that cause,

Which must prevail, till Ethiopia,
In all her realms, shall stretch her hands to God.
Yes ! the untiring eye of holy Faith
Pierces the intervening clouds, that darken
Her glorious prospect.—Where the orgies fell
Of idol gods were kept, the human knee
Bows in the name of Jesus ; and the heart
Of rebel man yields to redeeming love,
And owns him Lord.—See ! demon temples fall
Before the march sublime of pure religion.
Listen !—The praises of the great I AM
Sound where the heart-appalling shouts were heard
Of demon worship.—Africa ! the Spirit
Of peace shall dwell within thee.—'Neath its power,
Mighty in love, Oppression's iron arm
Shall be subdu'd.—To thy maternal bosom
Thy captive sons shall flock, as weary doves,
And find repose.—One universal shout
Proclaims, O Africa, thy children FREE—
Thy days of mourning ended.—"Tis the song
Of holy triumph !—thy accepted year
Has come,—thy eternal year of JUBILEE.

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